

**DRPT STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT
STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH SESSIONS REPORT**



DEVELOPED BY PULSAR ADVERTISING

APRIL 20, 2007 1011 E Main Street, Suite 226, Richmond, VA 23219 804.225.8300

•DRPT•

DRPT Strategic Assessment
Stakeholder Outreach Sessions
Table of Contents

I.	Executive Summary – Top-line Results	2
II.	Background	
	a. Organizational Assessment results.....	4
	b. Presentation to Workshop participants	9
III.	Results of Workshops	
	a. Roanoke	
	i. Major issues and common themes	13
	ii. Areas of importance to participants	13
	iii. Participant Recommendations	14
	b. Richmond	
	i. Major issues and common themes	21
	ii. Areas of importance to participants	22
	iii. Participant Recommendations	22
	c. Northern Virginia	
	i. Major issues and common themes	29
	ii. Areas of importance to participants	30
	iii. Participant Recommendations	31
	d. Hampton Roads	
	i. Major issues and common themes	38
	ii. Areas of importance to participants	39
	iii. Participant Recommendations	39

Appendices

A.	Sign-In Sheets by Region.....	44
B.	Facilitation Guide	52
C.	PowerPoint Presentation to Participants	56



I. Executive Summary – Top-Line Results

Four Stakeholder feedback sessions were held across Virginia (Roanoke, Richmond, Northern Virginia, and Hampton Roads) between March 27 and April 9, 2007 to solicit feedback from key DRPT stakeholder groups regarding the future of DRPT in Virginia.

The participants included representatives from the following stakeholder organizations:

- Business Community
- Commonwealth Transportation Board
- Human Services Organizations
- MPOs
- PDCs
- Planners/Policy Staff
- Rail Operators/Advocates
- Rail Advisory Board
- Regional Planning Organizations
- TDM Agencies/Advocates
- Transit Operators/Advocates

The process for the stakeholder feedback sessions included a presentation on the mandate of DRPT as defined by the Code of Virginia. The facilitator presented a summary of the DRPT Strategic Assessment Part 1 and 2 results as conducted by AECOM Consult, including an assessment of how DRPT has performed against the mandate as well as areas for improvement and industry best practices. Stakeholders then participated in a facilitated feedback session around ten key areas of concern to DRPT.

Some consistent themes emerged across the four sessions. The themes include a need for DRPT to:

- Have an increased presence at the local level (MPOs, PDCs, etc.) and increase on-site support, training, and education to stakeholder agencies
- Facilitate education and outreach about the benefits of rail, transit, and congestion management transportation solutions across the state including several key audiences (e.g., local, state, and federal policymakers, citizens, business, etc.) with focus on:
 - Environment
 - Land Use
 - Economic Development
 - Congestion Mitigation
- Explore ways to promote the benefits of rail, transit, and congestion management to local, regional and state audiences



- Facilitate on-going long-range strategic planning (20-30 years)
- Be active and involved when important transportation policy decisions are being made including a stronger coordination role with VDOT (i.e., “a place at the table”) during initial planning phases of major projects (e.g, including construction projects to incorporate rail, transit, and congestion management solutions)
- Develop statewide congestion management plan and establish priorities
- Act as a bridge between local transportation services to ensure service across regions
- Develop a comprehensive database of providers, resources, and information to serve as one central repository for state, regional and local stakeholders
- Develop a “banking” system to preserve rail corridors

Several stakeholders expressed how much they appreciate the good work DRPT currently does. Some of these stakeholders were concerned that new directions or opportunities DRPT may take on in the future might take away from the current level of service.



II. Background

a. Strategic Assessment results

b. Presentation to Workshop participants (key points)

Strategic Assessment Results

A Strategic Assessment of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation is being conducted by **AECOM Consult**. The summary results of Part 1 and Part 2 of the assessment were broken out into three distinct categories: performance-to-date, areas for improvement, and best practices. Within these categories, the results focused on DRPT's three business areas, including Rail, Transit, and Congestion Management.

Performance-to-Date

The overall performance assessment results show that DRPT:

- Adequately allocates/disburses existing program funds
- Does not sufficiently assess future needs or conduct rail, transit and congestion management planning
- Has a low profile and is under-represented in major decision-making institutions/processes in Virginia

The customer perception of DRPT is that:

- DRPT's profile is low outside the transit/rail community
- DRPT has low participation at many MPOs and at the local government level
- Rural and small urban areas need stronger DRPT support in their communities
- DRPT does not play role at most MPOs and policy-making institutions proportionate to its prominence in Commonwealth transportation policy

The results of DRPT's current performance assessment in Transportation Planning show that:

- Statewide transit needs are incomplete
 - 1- to 2-year needs are fully forecast
 - 6-year needs are partially forecast
 - Longer term needs are evaluated only in response to studies in specific markets
- Statewide rail needs are incomplete
 - No system in place to forecast rail needs and priorities
- Multimodal planning participation is largely reactive

The results of DRPT's current performance assessment for Rail show that:



- Capital improvements are managed by DRPT in the Washington to Richmond corridor, but progress is slower than expected
- Progress on future investments is limited to planning studies
 - Significant potential to increase and enhance passenger rail service in Washington to Richmond corridor
 - Progress on other passenger rail service projects is slow
- There is no formal evaluation process or systematic statewide plan to demonstrate the need for significant investments

The results of DRPT's current performance assessment for Transit show that:

- DRPT's current funding role is valued by grantees
- Technical assistance to rural and small urban grantees is limited compared to many other states
- There is limited evaluation of public benefits of state investments

The results of DRPT's current performance assessment for Congestion Management show that:

- The boundaries of congestion management are unclear
- Telework!VA and ridesharing are the clearest components but require needs assessments and promotion
- There is significant potential for greater impact in areas outside of today's current program

Areas for Improvement

Across DRPT's program when focusing on public benefits and return on investment, results of the assessment show that:

- Information related to public benefits can play a key role in building support and achieving results
 - Studies conducted in 1985 and 1994 demonstrated the public benefits of Metrorail in Northern Virginia, which was critical in maintaining legislative support
 - Colorado DOT measured the benefits of relocating freight traffic off the Front Range railroad in order to determine potential contributors to the capital costs
 - Florida DOT studied the economic impacts and transportation benefits of high-speed rail between Orlando and Tampa, and used the results to prioritize the corridor over others in the state
 - FHWA has considered the impact of highway corridor investments on economic development in order to evaluate potential corridor projects

When evaluating ways for DRPT to improve its role in transportation planning, results show that:

- Planning decisions often drive policy and investment decisions for transportation
- DRPT does not fulfill the role in planning that many other states fulfill:
 - North Carolina and Illinois both have 6 or more staff dedicated to statewide and mode-specific planning
 - Planning could be in-house and/or in partnership with other organizations
- Key planning organizations and projects need stronger DRPT involvement:
 - Regional MPOs/Transportation Planning Board
 - Multimodal Planning Office/VTRANS
 - Transportation associations and advocacy groups

The assessment also identifies some broader DRPT planning issues to be addressed such as:

- Transit-oriented development
- Land use planning and coordination
- Environmental benefits of DRPT programs

The Areas for Improvement also include specific business area as well as planning and policy improvements for rail, transit, and congestion management.

Business area improvements for rail and transit include:

- Demonstrating Return on Investment (ROI) and public benefits
- Identifying strategic investments
- Conducting strategic planning
- Making the case for additional investment

Rail-specific business area improvements show that DRPT should:

- Increase its role in:
 - passenger rail
 - facilitating freight rail improvements
 - preserving rail corridors

Transit-specific business area improvements show that DRPT should:

- Develop an asset management plan
- Increase technical assistance and rural/small transit support role

Congestion Management-specific business area improvements include:

- Demonstrating Return on Investment (ROI) and public benefits

- Increasing the reach of current programs:
 - Telework
 - Commuter Services
- Strengthening DRPT's congestion management role for major transportation projects (e.g., Springfield Interchange, Wilson Bridge, Dulles project, etc.) and key corridors

The required planning and policy improvements for rail, transit, and congestion management are identified as follows for each DRPT business area:

- Needs assessment
- Strategic investment plan
- Vision and goals in Virginia
- Policy development
 - In particular, congestion management policy should be coordinated with VDOT, other agencies, and localities
- Increased planning and policy participation
 - Local level discussions (MPO, PDC, etc.)
 - Regional discussions
 - State discussions

Best Practices

The assessment includes research into Best Practices for the industry. The report reflects the following key findings:

Planning and Policy Development

- DRPT does not fulfill the role in planning and statewide evaluation that many other states fulfill
 - Illinois dedicates 7 staff to:
 - Conduct rail program planning
 - Manage special transit studies
 - Represent the division in regional and state-wide planning and engineering efforts
 - Conduct detailed evaluations and analyses of public transportation and multimodal projects
 - North Carolina involves more than 6 staff in:
 - Attending MPO and regional planning meetings
 - Participating in regional and system transit studies
 - Managing consultant-led statewide planning contracts
 - Overseeing statewide planning projects in conjunction with MPOs
 - Participating in feasibility studies for intermodal and bus maintenance facilities

The best practices for Rail include:

- Performance requirements linked to capital investments:
 - *Capitol Corridor* (Sacramento-San Jose) capital investments tied to service frequency over various segments, levels of on-time performance, and specified travel times
 - Prioritization of capital investments as part of a long-range plan for rail corridors with freight railroads, passenger rail, and state/local government stakeholders involved in the selection process
- State/county acquisition of rail lines to ensure priority handling of passenger trains (NC, FL, CA, WA):
 - Control of dispatch ensures priority for passenger rail
 - Agreements with freight railroads regarding access (still needed)
- States with successful rail programs invest significant resources into rail planning and program management:
 - IL: 4 staff dedicated to planning; 3 more to passenger rail grants
 - NC: more than 45 staff dedicated to project execution and passenger rail grants

The best practices for Transit include:

- Other states with similar number of rural and small urban grantees provide more technical assistance:
 - NC: 8 staff for community transportation support
 - IL: 10 staff for small urban and rural grantees
- Technical assistance includes:
 - Greater field presence, including staff posted to other offices
 - Advising and assisting in the presentation of plans and studies
 - Attending local steering committee meetings
 - Leading development of Human Services Transportation Plans
 - Federal grant program management
 - Support for technology investments and procurement
 - Statewide vehicle procurement
- Promoting the public benefits of transit investments

The best practices for Congestion Management include:

- The best programs contribute to vehicle mile reductions compared to trends and contribute to meeting air quality goals
- Other states do significantly more in TDM/Congestion Management:
 - Development of a statewide TDM plan (NC)
 - Regional web-based trip planning, including rail and transit

- Development of model ordinances for land use and reduced parking (NC)
- Technical assistance in cross-jurisdictional transportation planning (CA)
- Assessment of corridor-related transportation problems and development of integrated program of desired improvements (CA)
- Consideration/demos of congestion pricing
- Land use planning including traffic impact studies
- If DRPT's congestion management area is expanded, it could include:
 - Analysis and promotion of congestion relief projects/initiatives
 - Traveler information systems to avoid congestion

Presentation to Workshop Participants

The presentation to the workshop participants was comprised of the following three components:

- An overview of the DRPT Mandate
- A review of the results of Part 1 and 2 of the Strategic Assessment
- Receiving stakeholder feedback on the discussion items

The workshops began with an introduction by a representative of DRPT, explaining the strategic assessment and the purpose behind these sessions. The Facilitator provided a brief overview of the session ground rules, which included:

- Focus on "What" not "How"
- Respect others
- No bad ideas (i.e., all ideas are good)
- When reporting use active verbs
- Session may be recorded to develop notes
- Cell phones/pagers off/set to vibrate

Overview of Mandate

The participants were organized into groups and took five minutes, working together, to list DRPT's responsibilities as they understood them. Upon completion of the group exercise, a hard copy of the actual mandate was distributed and reviewed with the participants. The participants were asked to compare the group results to the actual mandate. The group with the most correct answers won a prize.

Review of Assessment Results

A PowerPoint presentation of the results of the Strategic Assessment was given including Performance-to-Date, Areas for Improvement, and Best Practices (for details regarding the contents of the presentation, see Background section of this Report).

After a short break the workshop attendees were formed into homogenous groups, to the extent possible, by business area (rail with rail, transit and Human Services together, TDM and Rideshare agencies together).

Each group was given two discussion items to address. In Hampton Roads, due to a smaller group size, groups were each given five discussion items. The groups designated a scribe and a presenter and had to list their responses on poster-sized sheets.

The groups were instructed to focus on the "What" (not the "How") when providing feedback. The groups were instructed to avoid responses that focused on staffing or funding in order to ensure that recommendations would be unconstrained.

After the allotted time, each discussion item was read aloud and the leader of each group gave the consolidated feedback. All participants were then given an opportunity to give additional feedback and ideas (which were all added to the list). This process continued for all ten discussion items. This proved to be a very effective method for collecting feedback.

Wrap-Up

At the conclusion of the session, the DRPT representative thanked the workshop attendees for participating and solicited their feedback as to whether or not the workshop was beneficial. In every session, workshop attendees appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback to DRPT and to learn more about a broad range of transportation issues across the state. The DRPT representative concluded by informing the participants that the consolidated feedback would be incorporated into a stakeholder feedback report and that comments would be taken into consideration as DRPT's Strategic Assessment enters the final Part 3 phase, where a DRPT business plan will be developed. The participants were informed that the resulting changes and improvements developed through this Strategic Assessment are scheduled to be implemented in August 2007.



Results of Workshops



III. Results of Workshops

e. Roanoke Session

- i. Major issues and common themes**
- ii. Areas of importance to participants**
- iii. Participant Recommendations**

The first stakeholder feedback session was held in Roanoke, Virginia at the RADAR offices on March 27, 2007. There were 21 attendees (the largest turnout of all four sessions). The attendees came from a wide array of stakeholder organizations with a large number of rail and human services representatives present.

Major Issues and Common Themes

Some major issues and common themes expressed at this session included:

- DRPT needs to increase its visibility, especially to local officials and policy makers. One participant voiced, “No one knows who or what DRPT is, and that is a problem that needs to be addressed. “
- DRPT needs to become more actively involved in meetings and processes at the regional and local level. DRPT must have an active voice in planning, policy making and educating the public – from the legislature to the consumers – on what exactly DRPT’s role is in rail, transit and congestion management.
- DRPT needs to conduct more research on the benefits of rail, transit and congestion management and publish the results in a statewide promotional campaign.
- It was expressed by several people at this meeting that they think DRPT is currently doing a good job. Some attendees were worried that if DRPT tries to accomplish all of these new goals, the current service provided by DRPT will deteriorate.

Areas of Importance to Participants

In this session, there were three main areas of importance to participants: freight rail, rural and small transit systems, and human services transportation. These discussion items yielded the highest number of responses from the group.

For freight rail, the main items of concern, as expressed by the participants, revolved around long-range planning and educating the public on the value of freight rail. For example, every freight railcar carries four times the cargo of a truck. The more freight rail the Commonwealth utilizes equals fewer trucks on the road.

The main item of concern involving rural and small transit systems, as expressed by the stakeholders, is that DRPT needs to have a greater understanding of geographic area, population base and the overall programs. DRPT needs to be more present at the local level, especially when it comes to planning.

Human service transportation issues include the need for better coordination among human service transportation providers. Many felt that DRPT should assume that leadership role. Also, although the providers were thankful for the 5310 vehicles they receive, not all providers need 20 passenger vans – particularly in small rural areas where they only pick-up five passengers or less.

Participant Recommendations

Feedback was collected on all discussion items, first from homogenous groups and then from all of the participants at the session. Each discussion item began with the phrase: “*What are the best ways for DRPT to...*” The detailed recommendations for each discussion item are as follows:

Increase support to rural and small transit systems:

- Stakeholders are happy with DRPT's current support
- DRPT needs to have a greater understanding of geographic areas, population base, and the distance people have to travel to reach common convenience. In some cases it's several miles to the nearest grocery store
- DRPT needs to become more visible to local officials making local policies
- DRPT is represented by transit managers (as opposed to DRPT staff) at local meetings
- DRPT needs to be more aware of programs and their functions
- DRPT should be considered more in local planning and continue to support the state transportation associations – ex: CTAV
- Strive to become a household word or acronym - What is DRPT? (e.g., everyone knows what DMV is)
- Do a better job of providing support and pressuring localities and local governments to fund and facilitate resources (i.e., how to get



- Radford city to move towards more public transportation). There should be more state level people saying this is needed
- Cities, localities, and towns need to be more supportive and convinced of needs
 - Bedford City and County are having issues with Greyhound. They currently have no public transportation and are conducting studies to see if they need it. Look at the population of people without cars. Yes they need it
 - DRPT needs to step-up and be more convincing
 - A current issue is to enhance the human service coordination workshops

Develop a more active role in passenger rail for Virginia:

- Develop and plan a demand-based passenger rail system for Virginia. This is harder to do in VA rather than in NC, since there are no large population centers but it seems to be a good concept to benchmark - better than TDX, which goes across state
- DRPT should analyze the cost/benefit and public benefit (i.e., cost benefit analysis) – not well done with TDX
- Some public benefits include:
 - Economic development, environment, safety, land use and congestion mitigation
- Work with VRE, NS and CSX in a leadership role and conduct long-range feasibility assessments
- Do a targeted analysis of niche markets – college students, people that can't drive, people afraid to fly, etc. The MPO has a kiosk at airport getting customer feedback on issues on which they'd like to get more information - passenger rail was the number one response from ticketed airline passengers

Increase facilitation of freight rail improvements and preservation of rail corridors for the future:

- Develop a long-term strategy for use of rail for the public benefit.
- DRPT should have greater representation and be more actively involved - more than they already are – to help with strategies and research
- Increase number of Rail staff in DRPT
- Increase visibility
- Public education – provide assistance to increase public awareness of the value and potential of moving freight by rail. Value of freight – I-81 has much heavier long haul traffic than designed for. Increased freight by rail will take freight off of highway. Takes congestion off the road and limits damage to roads



- Environmentally, a lot more freight can be moved by rail using less petroleum and putting fewer pollutants into the air (e.g., a loaded freight car carries four times the cargo of a truck). This means fewer vehicles on the interstate
- Develop ability to preserve rail corridors for potential future use. A corridor that is not preserved can't be used for passenger or freight. There is no way for a railroad to put it aside without paying taxes and retaining liability
- DRPT should develop a rail bank program – Commonwealth could purchase the rail corridor to save for future use and rail companies would not have the on-going tax burden. Corridors could be donated to the Commonwealth for state parks, which would preserve the corridors for future use
- Public education – Freight industry says regular people don't understand the correlation between the products they buy and the freight system – neither do elected officials. Need a statewide public information campaign to connect products to freight system. One respondent said they recommend that a course be developed for all business majors in Commonwealth on how freight works. Truck and rail freight need to work together. Education cuts through all these things – either formally or through advocacy. When you order something online, it has to be delivered in some fashion
- Public / Private partnerships – Heartland Corridor – one big hang-up in wider use of freight rail is that the railroads are privately owned and VDOT is in charge of the majority of public investments. 95% of VDOT's investments are in highways. Better coordination where you can make rail vs. highway tradeoffs. How do we take these two dissimilar organizations and views to work together to maximize public benefit? Need some internal champions – people who can get people to work together to determine whether it is more beneficial to put investments in highway or rail. Coordination by DRPT
- One alternative when VDOT widens roads should be investing in rail instead of road improvements. Make rail a viable alternative to VDOT projects

Increase participation in regional and local planning:

- Have a representative from DRPT for each PDC to be actively involved in meetings and processes
- There are two places to go for support for initiatives in rural areas – the PDC and DRPT. Need to be more in tune to work together. Need to appreciate local issues
- DRPT needs to play a more active role in approaching local agencies. They don't often hear a lot from DRPT. Local agencies



- need to go to DRPT more often – usually it's only when you need money. Have an active voice coming from DRPT
- Be a leader in filling public transportation gaps. Virginia Tech did a study, but how is the leadership going to continue for that? Everyone leaves and goes back to their own issues; DRPT needs to keep up the momentum on these studies
 - VDOT has put a planner in each of their construction districts. DRPT needs to do the same thing. More effective planning

Develop a more active role in congestion management:

- DRPT needs to be more active in educating the public (boards, regional, etc.) Statewide educational or PR marketing program to educate people in the choices they make in transportation. Each rideshare organization could adjust their marketing budgets and tactics to be more focused. DRPT should get into targeting – buzz marketing – instead of pulling money out of marketing. No local PDC or rideshare agency alone has enough money to use TV
- DRPT could develop statewide commercials to ease budgets
- More investment in Park and Ride (PNR) locations. A policy that anytime an interchange is redone or added that a PNR solution is considered by default. Similar to VDOT's bicycle policy
- State Level marketing research – targeted marketing. What type of people and how to get the message across. Local agencies don't have the resources to do this research. This should be done at the state level
- Cluster marketing (soccer moms/pod casts). Use schools, etc
- Differential pricing – HOT lanes. Charge people more when they commute adversely to the public good. Lower off-peak prices

Increase support to human service transportation:

- Create a broker concept. Comes from a study from VPI about Human Service transportation. It's difficult for one transit agency to transport another's customers because they don't know if they would get paid. A broker would be a social worker where they would take cases. Issue a special card and the broker's job would make the financing work at the end. Transit agencies won't have to be worried about getting paid
- More curb-to-curb service as opposed to fixed routes
- Human service coordinator between different transit providers
- Increase support of non-emergency medical transportation programs
- Support technology development. A lot of problems with efficiency and financial issues that restrict development of new solutions and hurt efficiency



- Brokerage system that exists now is broken and difficult to work with. Work with DMS to get things better organized, regulated and analyzed
- Be more proactive
- Basic federal 5310 program support is only through vehicles – have more say-so in the type of vehicles that can be ordered. Don't need a 20-passenger vehicle on a rural road where he'll be picking up five people. Saves gas and money. Rumor has it that next year all vehicles will have to have lift gates – not needed. Very thankful for 5310 vehicles we get but we don't always need the large vehicles that we get through the funding. Need more active lobbying for allowing spending outside of vehicle funding – administrative costs, etc

Develop competitive transportation proposals and solutions as compared to highway solutions:

- Increase resources and staff and money to do research required for necessary planning
- Coordinate with VDOT and others and establish effective partnerships with these groups
- Enhance advocacy groups, better understanding with local governments
- Establish outcome measures, analyze and report results.
- Change something. Make things happen that you want to have happen
- Some people think that if you don't take all the cars off the road then what good is it? In reality, if you take 5% of cars off the road, that is just as good or better. Educate that we're only trying to get 5% of cars off the road and why
- Education – need to change attitudes. Long-term goal. Tough one. Make it entertaining
- Have plug-ins for laptops, ipods on bus and rail – TV in buses and railcars with soap operas playing. What's changed about buses in the past 40 years?
- We're focused on our cars. Develop a personal cost analysis. What is this costing me? We want what we want. If the gas tax were increased, maybe we could change attitudes. It's different in a big city. Farmers don't care about getting cars off the road. No options for transportation in rural areas

Encourage transit-oriented development:

- Continue current initiative to develop statewide coordination plan for human service transportation

- Work with local groups – economic development and planning to accommodate/develop public transit especially in rural and small urban areas
- Make bus up as a Gila monster (develop fun bus wraps)
- Conduct needs assessment at state and local level. Where is it needed? Example: College campuses – sidewalks vs. dirt paths
- Statewide incentives to local governments – tax incentives to private industry
- Encourage/inform local governments/policy makers/elected officials
- Private sector should be offered tax incentive for transit planning, bus shelters, etc
- Lobby on local level. Have DRPT make a presentation to local governments to talk to decision makers. Encourage them to talk to their planning departments. Planners are aware and will make it happen if they get the okay from their bosses. Top down approach

Better coordinate land use and transportation:

- DRPT should be more involved with local governments and planning when developing things like transit oriented development (e.g., it does help to have a bus stop or shelter)
- Increased visibility in involvement with the state and economic development agencies. Incentives offered for developments to locate where transit is
- Provide more technical assistance to transit partners in the areas of planning and development/future growth. Make models available and educate
- Incorporate transportation into EPA impact studies. Need more guidance and standardization
- More issues in small urban and rural. No planners on staff. Planning on six-year plan takes a lot of time for one person
- Is there some kind of requirement to analyze environmental impact? Does this include transportation? If so, more thought might be put into development whether transportation is good or bad

Emphasize the environmental benefits of rail, transit, and congestion management:

- Support for technology investments. Alternative fuels – JMU College of Science is trying to encourage alternate fuel usage. Be involved in encouraging alternate fuels through education, funding. Need to encourage use and education – they are using bio-diesel
- Fuel usage studies and research



- More statistics to show that so many passengers save this many gallons of fuel – real world examples of savings. Need formulas to get word out
- Continued emphasis on coordination of public transit/human services products
- Everyone wants to just do his or her own thing. DRPT needs to be the referee between agencies when needed
- Wouldn't it be nice? Campaign to go along with the fuel usage? 5 degrees cooler if people carpool? More shade? All of the trees are dying because of pollution. How individual choices effect environment



f. Richmond Session

- i. Major issues and common themes**
- ii. Areas of importance to participants**
- iii. Participant Recommendations**

The second stakeholder session was held in Richmond, Virginia at the Science Museum of Virginia on April 2, 2007. There were 20 attendees (the second highest turnout of all four sessions). The attendees came from a wide array of stakeholder organizations with a number of rail (including two Rail Advisory Board members) and local transit and PDC representatives present.

Major Issues and Common Themes

Some major issues and common themes expressed at this session included the following:

- DRPT needs to act as a mediator or facilitator between federal, state and local agencies when determining priorities for both passenger and freight rail. DRPT should be an advocate for passenger and freight rail to the General Assembly.
- DRPT needs to become more actively involved in meetings and processes at the regional and local level. DRPT must have an active voice in planning, policy making and educating the various agency audiences – from the legislature to the public – on what exactly DRPT's role is in rail, transit and congestion management.
- DRPT needs to become a resource for direct service providers and also communicate successes with programs to state administration and legislative branches.
- DRPT must be more active in the political environment to set policies for rail, transit and congestion management.
- DRPT tends to rely too heavily on consultants. Needs to develop expertise internally.

Areas of Importance to Participants

In this session, there were three main areas of importance to participants: passenger and freight rail interaction, congestion management, and transit. These discussion items yielded the highest number of responses from the group.

For passenger and freight rail interaction, the main items of concern revolved around ensuring the efficient operations of passenger and freight rail service and preserving rail corridors. DRPT should serve as an intermediary between passenger and freight rail interests.

The main item of concern involving congestion management is that DRPT should get involved immediately when transportation planning is beginning. DRPT should be active in local and long-range planning. Also, DRPT should recognize and promote the huge public benefits of ridesharing.

Transit issues included the need for better communication between service providers. DRPT should assume that role. Also, DRPT needs to have a better understanding of local issues and offer planning and technical assistance to localities.

Participant Recommendations

Feedback was collected on all discussion items, first from homogenous groups and then from all of the participants at the session. Also in this session, the groups were asked to determine whether DRPT should “Lead” or “Coordinate” efforts regarding each discussion item. As part of a continuous quality improvement effort, the client and the facilitator agreed to modify the facilitation guide after the Roanoke session and it was determined that the groups should be asked to recommend whether DRPT should “Lead” or “Coordinate” efforts for each discussion item. Each discussion item began with the phrase: “*What are the best ways for DRPT to...*” The recommendations for each discussion item are as follows:

Increase support to rural and small transit systems: *(Split opinions between LEAD and COORDINATE)*

- Spend more time in the field
- Develop regional offices
- Provide marketing support
- All transit agencies should be included in the exchange of information



- More quarterly conference calls, toll free, and divide by system size (everyone needs to be included)
- Large physical presence – More frequent issue in rural areas
- Coordinate/Create transit development plans that connect and regionalize transit delivery
- Ease access to State Procurement for vendors- \$500 EVA access fee
- Promote training and management compliance with regulation issues
- Act as a resource for new project and infrastructure development
- Advocate on behalf of rural transit to the State and Fed

Develop a more active role in passenger rail for Virginia:

(LEAD)

- Determine rail corridors where passenger rail is feasible and desirable
- Determine what improvements need to be made to permit passenger rail service
- Determine total cost of providing passenger rail service
- Establish priorities for service
- Act as an intermediary or facilitator between feds, state, and localities
- Commonwealth doesn't own corridors. Need an intermediary to talk to rail line owners
- Eliminate the 30% match for passenger projects (Rail Enhancement Fund) – used for capital projects, not operations
- For today – if DRPT were to fulfill all of these needs, a whole new set of needs would arise- need consistent needs assessments and strategies for improvement
- The following recommendations come from a letter submitted during the meeting:
 - Recruit a few individuals, ideally three, with real world *intercity rail* experience in engineering, operations, and commercial development – individuals with good objective, generic rail experience in both freight and passenger matters
 - Working through the Secretary, seek support from the Governor's office to appeal to the Virginia delegation in Congress in support of rail funding legislation that will enable the Commonwealth to leverage the Rail Enhancement Fund in a manner comparable to the way Federal/State highway construction funding is administered
 - Reduce reliance upon outside consultants (this relates directly to the first item above) thereby building up the "thinking" capabilities within DRPT, by reducing the outsourcing of "thinking." Even with the existing DRPT staff, much more



innovation and creativity is likely available if such conduct is encouraged and welcomed

- Begin to formulate and promote comprehensive plans for *intercity rail* infrastructure and service development – both freight and passenger – that are appropriate to the present and future needs of commercial cargo transport and personal mobility of the citizens of the Commonwealth. For too long, DRPT has waited to hear from, and react to, the Class I's, the Short Lines, and Amtrak, rather than first determining what is in the best interest of the State. While all of the previously named corporate constituents are very important, and must be respected, the broad public interests of the Commonwealth are more so

Increase facilitation of freight rail improvements and preservation of rail corridors for the future:

(LEAD)

- Identify rail corridors in VA that are subject to abandonment
- Be more efficient in managing and acting on rail preservation applications
- Be an advocate for the three rail programs with the administration and General Assembly
- Class I's should be required to inform the state when they plan to abandon track. Could the state become the buyer of last resort – thereby leaving the rail bed in place in case it is needed later?
- Provide management support (funding) programs to enable better long-term rail planning
- Provide staff with rail knowledge to support the Rail Director
- Continue to support the folks who are making use of /keeping up with the tracks that would otherwise be abandoned
- State should have the first say in whether or not a rail bed should be abandoned. VA Beach is an example of former rail infrastructure and this issue should be evaluated in that context
- Preservation and facilitation of freight rail
- Resolve issues along the Richmond to Washington DC rail corridor
- Need second corridor/separate corridor (Dangerous commodity movements)

Increase participation in regional and local planning:

(Not Applicable – “COORDINATE”)

- Develop regional offices
- Increase technical assistance
- Increase presence at MPO meetings
- Better information sharing at the State level



- Review large development plans
- Facilitate having area transit systems sign off on area site plans
- Land use transportation planning expertise
- Not everyone has an MPO. Transit specialist on local planning organization

Develop a more active role in congestion management:

(COORDINATE – Already do this)

- Compile and provide data to: (ASAP)
 - Local government planning
 - Rail and transit properties
 - Developers
 - Become a resource for information
- Link Congestion Management impacts to new projects - Modeling
- Create a knowledge base for the general public through marketing and training
- Seat at the table at the beginning of phase one planning for construction projects. Get in when transportation planning is started
- Be active in local transportation planning and long-range planning
- Land-use planner needed
- Transportation planner needed
- Statewide congestion management plan
- Support more transit infrastructure
- Support additional rail (light & heavy) infrastructure
- Statewide public service announcements (PSA) marketing for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) – congestion management
- Subsidize fares for low to moderate income commuters
- Provide more technical assistance to localities to develop congestion management studies and transportation plans
- DRPT should participate more in the National Transportation survey process to test public attitudes on congestion management
- Three-year and/or five-year congestion management plans

Increase support to human service transportation:

(COORDINATE)

- Increase presence at Human Service and Transit agencies
- DRPT should be a resource for direct service providers. Plug in support for regulations and legislative issues
- Provide feedback on rural and Human Service transportation successes to the General Assembly and legislative branches
- Coordinate strategic planning in the broad sense across the Commonwealth



- Participate in State and National transportation and Human service associations
- Is there at the MPO level a repository of Human Service information? In four months there will be-consolidation and coordination efforts for human service transportation.. Volunteer driver program
- Some regions have information and some don't
- Human Service agencies are already having workshop sessions with DRPT.
- Aging, ADA, disabled, etc
- How many groups have their own vehicles to provide transportation? DRPT is going to come up with a plan and information sharing. Possibly to coordinate groups together
- State regional coordination of a list of services – Resource directory
- Some agencies have insurance problems depending on the areas that those programs can or can't connect
- This human service transportation coordination effort that DRPT is undertaking comes from the federal mandate
- Each state must have a plan to coordinate human service programs
- Human services are lumped in with urban systems. Can't rate performance with urban numbers. Can't use passengers per mile. Need a separate statistical measurement system for the rural and human service program
- DRPT should be a repository for information

Develop competitive transportation proposals and solutions as compared to highway solutions:

(LEAD)

- DRPT should look at 6-year VDOT plan
- Initiate projects and propose TDM, transit, and rail solutions to mitigate congestion problems such as:
 - PNR lots
 - Promote rideshare/vanpool/carpooling
 - Rail extension – heavy and light
 - Transit extension – increase routes, hours, different, more types
 - Telework/Telecenters
 - BRT
 - Multimodal solutions
 - Toll facilities, congestion pricing
- Need a state policy – BEFORE we build another road, we are going to consider all the other transportation (TDM) alternatives



Encourage transit-oriented development:

(COORDINATE)

- Work with localities to rezone and require proffers for:
 - TDM
 - Bus purchases
 - Bus shelters
 - Commuter lots
 - Pedestrian friendly developments
 - Bike and pedestrian trails
- Work with localities to adopt transit friendly development
 - Changes to local comprehensive plans
 - Zoning ordinances
 - Code of Virginia changes
- Tax credits for transit-oriented developments for the developers
- Mixed-use development
- DRPT must be more active in the political environment
- Need to be more active at the General Assembly
- Need to educate and offer up technical assistance to localities
- DRPT needs to understand local issues and give technical assistance
- DRPT is doing a great job – love them to death
- DRPT needs to get involved in planning at the local level

Better coordinate land use and transportation:

(COORDINATE)

- Create a statewide technical assistance program and staff up to do this. Help localities and regions on an ongoing basis with:
 - Transit Development Plans, Transit, Bike/Ped
 - Land use element – corridor definition/design standards
 - Coordinated with DOT/MPOs/PDCs
- Allocate discretionary resources based in part on coordination of land use and transit – Local/Regional/State
- Identify transit oriented development potential sites by region

Emphasize the environmental benefits of rail, transit, and congestion management:

(LEAD)

- Run Mobile 6 on all projects to acquire data (TDM, transit, rail). EVERY PROJECT SHOULD BE subject to Mobile 6 (a federal program requirement to calculate program benefits)
- Then:
 - PR campaign – that highlights quality of life/environment/safety/economic vitality
 - Too many cars on the road



- e.g. wrap buses, focus on fuel savings, congestion management impact
- Show that everything DRPT does has an impact on congestion
- Come up with statistics to relate- X dollars for transit equals so many jobs/economic development, etc. Put statistics on buses

Parking Lot Issues (that could not be resolved during the session)

- Is DRPT allowed to ask for funds? Does the grantee need to go to the General Assembly? Can DRPT lobby?



g. Northern Virginia Session

- i. Major issues and common themes**
- ii. Areas of importance to participants**
- iii. Participant Recommendations**

The third stakeholder session was held in Northern Virginia at the offices of NVTC on April 5, 2007. Sixteen stakeholders attended this session. The attendees came from a wide array of stakeholder organizations with a number of high-level county and community leaders present, including a member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board and a member of the Rail Advisory Board.

Major Issues and Common Themes

Some major issues and common themes expressed at this session included:

- A question came up at this session with regard to the assessment results and comparison to other states (NC and IL). Attendees wanted to know how “old” the other agencies in those states were compared to DRPT (i.e., DRPT was started in 1992, how does that compare to when the NC and IL organizations began?).
- DRPT needs to become more actively involved in implementation and planning in rural and small urban transit systems, especially long-range planning – 20 to 30 years out.
- DRPT should be more proactive, rather than reactive, in developing plans for freight and passenger rail and transportation solutions. DRPT should develop a coherent statewide vision for planning purposes.
- DRPT needs to act as a bridge to connect local planning and other groups, such as environmental, business and economic development. DRPT should take an active role in coordinating between federal, state and local agencies as well.
- DRPT should cooperate more with VDOT and insist on a “place at the table” when VDOT projects are being planned.
- DRPT must be more active in the political environment to set policies for rail, transit and congestion management.

- DRPT should communicate, educate, and promote its transportation solutions to everyone from the general public to policymakers.
- All of the divisions within DRPT must coordinate with each other and work together to prioritize efforts in congestion management.

Areas of Importance to Participants

In this session, there were three main areas of importance to participants: development of comprehensive transportation solutions (including better planning to incorporate rail, transit, and congestion management), passenger and freight rail interaction, and human services transportation. These discussion items yielded the highest number of responses from the group.

The stakeholders felt that it was important for DRPT to develop comprehensive transportation solutions (including better planning to incorporate rail, transit, and congestion management) and that DRPT should cooperate with local entities to develop a master plan for rail, transit and congestion management corridors. DRPT should sponsor more projects and put serious funding into technology research and solutions. When planning corridors, all modal solutions must be considered from the beginning. Individuals should be given multiple choices for each corridor – multiple solutions, not just one solution.

For passenger and freight rail, the main areas of importance revolved around developing win-win solutions with passenger and freight rail interests. It was also stated that DRPT should take the lead in the development of rail policy for Virginia and cooperate with freight railroads on projects that will be beneficial to the state.

Some important issues raised regarding human service transportation were that DRPT should create a liaison for statewide human service coordination – there are only local efforts currently. DRPT needs to identify human service transportation areas of need and coordinate solutions to meet those needs. DRPT should also investigate what other states are doing and coordinate between federal, state, and local programs to work out comprehensive strategies for mobility.



Participant Recommendations

Feedback was collected on all discussion items, first from homogenous groups and then from all of the participants at the session. Also in this session, the groups were asked to determine whether DRPT should “Lead” or “Coordinate” efforts regarding each discussion item. Each discussion item began with the phrase: “What are the best ways for DRPT to...” The recommendations for each discussion item are as follows:

Increase support to rural and small transit systems:

(Split opinions between LEAD and COORDINATE – there is no coordination in small areas – DRPT should implement plans)

- Provide tech support and design of system
- Give localities a model to use
- Provide start up resources in a phased support system
- Define a good outcome and a measure of success
- Assist in setting realistic goals
- Assist in material procurement – buses/light rail/etc.
- Variable route services. Specialized practice that works in small communities. Need a lot of guidance. Where is it being done elsewhere? PRTC does it well
- Rural link bus to VRE
- Gap analysis to sell idea to localities to point out gaps in service
- Look at all types of transit and capitalize on coordination with rural and small areas. It's more economical for one small rural area to cooperate with other areas instead of having two separate systems
- Also works with equipment – joint procurement
- Assistance in a LONG-range strategic plan – also applies to large areas – longer than 5 years – 20 or 30 years out
- Provide policy-making support for people serving in board roles for small and rural systems
- Board Member 101
- Education for everyone including staff
- Economies of scale

Develop a more active role in passenger rail for Virginia:

(LEAD)

- Define the rail corridors
- Ensure market for survival – the need for passenger rail service
- Ensure local participation
- Ensure complete implementation of current rail contracts
- Take the lead in negotiation with railroads
- Take the lead in the rail policy of VA
- Flow of information both ways

- Take the lead in rail resources, funding, etc.
- Coordinate fed, state, local
- Coordinate improvements to right of way
- Coordinate bus links to railroads
- Coordinate measure of success for passenger rail
- In VA passenger rail is synonymous with being on freight rail. Need to acquire more freight rail savvy
- Due to volume, there is a point where passenger and freight rail must split
- DPRT and the relationship with fed (Amtrak) inter-city rail. State may have to step-up to the plate with funding if feds back out
- What is the cost to keep up interstates compared to rail? Show benefits of rail over a long period of time as opposed to the quick fix of roads
- Dispatch for passenger rail is done by the state in Florida. State doesn't have a role in ensuring smooth operation in Virginia. No control of rail in VA. Could be negotiated if somebody had a big enough stick. VA needs to gain control of passenger rail and dispatch

Increase facilitation of freight rail improvements and preservation of rail corridors for the future:
(LEAD)

- DRPT needs to be more proactive rather than reactive so that needs are assessed and projects considered based on public benefit before plans are developed
- Coordinate with other states
- Cooperative relationship with freight railroads. Sometimes adversarial. Rail Enhancement Fund is a big improvement – brings money to the table
- Invest in purchase of right of way and rail corridors where advantageous and feasible
- Increase funding for partnership projects
- Partner with freight railroads in projects beneficial to the state
- Roll on / roll off areas – get trucks off the road
- Rail should do more long-distance trips
- Some states land bank abandoned lines so corridor is preserved
- Coordinate with private sector in intermodal sites
- Putting public money into private railroads – whole public benefit needs to be defined to justify investment
- Communicate, market and inform – make sure that it gets out that “we’re doing it because....” Let everyone know
- Cost is fairly extensive – benefit is for a long, long time. It has to be right – once investments are made in rail, it’s for a long time



- Hold freight railroads accountable for meeting their side of the bargain. Put a penalty clause in contracts

Increase participation in regional and local planning:

(LEAD and COORDINATE)

- DRPT should put more resources into support for regional and local planning. Needs to bring something to the table, i.e. incentives
- Act as a bridge to connect individual/local planning and other groups, such as environmental, business and economic development
- Consider when stakeholders need to have a legislative role to pull pieces together. Shouldn't back down
- DRPT needs to develop a coherent statewide vision. All areas are going to be different but there are some common threads in terms of goals throughout the state
- Can't create the vision unless there is an inventory of regional and local planning. DRPT needs to have that information / comprehensive. Example: when the 2020 Transportation Plan was developed the localities could never get the I-95 corridor out of gridlock. Additional DRPT input would have been helpful. They never even looked at a freight rail solution. What if they could have invested in CSX to get trucks off I-95? Need to look at freight rail as part of solution. Every railcar takes eight trucks off the road

Develop a more active role in congestion management:

(LEAD and COORDINATE [Cross-jurisdictional – Lead/Intra-jurisdictional – Coordinate])

- Develop congestion management measurements – Need measurements for bike/pedestrian & telecommuting
- Implementation and coordination with VDOT. How do numbers coordinate? (roads vs. rail)
- New set of regulations – 527 – impact assessments for developments. There is an expectation that developers are going to confer with transit operators to take the edge off of traffic congestion – there is no guidance on how transit operators are going to respond. DRPT needs to convene a discussion with transit operators on how to position themselves in responding to 527 questions. How do you know what the developer is saying is true? There is no rule that developers MUST communicate with transit operators. They can put down anything they want. DRPT should take an active role to fix this
- Intelligent transportation technology – signal technology/ prioritization
- Information dissemination to public



- Sensitivity training for traffic engineers – need to be “urbanized”
- DRPT has TDM group, transit group, etc. There has got to be a better way to have all these functions working together and coordinating together – rideshare doesn’t want to talk to transit, etc. If DRPT is going to put together a statewide role in congestion management, they have to work together to prioritize and eliminate “turf wars”

Increase support to human service transportation:

(LEAD and COORDINATE)

- Create a liaison for statewide human service coordination – only local now
- GAP analysis –find out where the needs are – clusters of people
- Need to coordinate in high-density areas. Low-density areas can coordinate with cab companies. Identify areas of need and coordinate solutions to meet the need. No study has been done on this
- Liaison to state agencies involved in Human Service transportation that isn’t transit
- Become a more active member of national efforts to take down issue of co-mingling of funds – United We Ride
- Continue coordination that DRPT has with COG human services plan – Neil Sherman has been an active participant
- Study what is working in different places – Metro Access (not successful). Other places may have something that works better – other states. Faith-based programs – MD does Area Agency on Aging in Montgomery County – Jewish Community Center (JCC). Need to see what works and what doesn’t
- State needs to have some sort of inventory of providers – best and worst - have a full understanding of what is being done and go from there. One stop shop for communication on how to navigate choices and what’s available.
- Human service transportation is costly. Can it be accomplished by fixed-route service? Need to analyze with the baby boomers in mind.
- In some cases, only providers are dealing with feds directly – some transportation issues have to go through the state first. Metro Access hasn’t seen the state take a role – rules and regs only come from feds. No involvement from the state in human services issues
- Understand regulatory issues in ADA arena – curb-to-curb isn’t going to cut it with FTA anymore. Need to confine regulatory issues
- Emergency Planning/Evacuation Planning for special needs populations - **this relates to all questions**. Fairfax County is looking at



- the issue of universal housing – not just for people with disabilities – but all people who need help
- Need to look at universal transportation design for aging population - need to look at all populations. There needs to be an overall principal of universal mobility when designing transportation
- There is a whole series of workshops and programs to deal with human services – changing signage, more access and ability for people who are aging. Need to make transportation more accessible to aging population. Baby boomers need to be driven to transit. Largest segment of growth is going to be senior citizens
- Policy, study, and monitoring role on what's being planned for aging population

Develop competitive transportation proposals and solutions as compared to highway solutions:

(LEAD)

- DRPT needs to be more proactive than reactive
- Develop a master plan for rail, transit, and TDM corridors with local cooperation
- Sponsor more projects
- Be the lead agency on projects
- Be an active cooperating agency with VDOT on VDOT projects
- Insist on a place at table
- Best practice – transit in highway projects (Bus Rapid Transit)
- Technology – fund it! Real time information. AVL – automated vehicle location systems – customers know when next bus is going to arrive. Signal priority technology is also important
- Need to work with highways and insist on role for transit
- Start to develop rail and transit corridors
- Implement a standard of passenger miles per rail mile. If your PMRM is not up to a certain level, don't do it
- All modal solutions should be looked at when planning corridors at beginning phases. Must be multimodal
- Level the playing field on state funding so there is no inherent bias in comparing highway and transit solutions. Show that the transit solution actually helps the highway
- Highway modeling vs. transit – need to focus on passenger modeling – not vehicle modeling
- Changing the measurement of how we measure projects
- Give a choice to the person in each corridor – multiple choices for each corridor – give multiple solutions, not just one solution. Too hard to give one choice

Encourage transit-oriented development:

(COORDINATE [unless DRPT becomes a provider or operator in the future])

- Best Practices – what has worked and not worked
- Grant program – incentives for more Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Insist on land use decisions before investments in corridors and station locations
- Multimodal – pedestrian access, bus access, parking control, amenities
- Broaden authority of transit agencies – value capture, being able to acquire property, create critical mass of transit friendly land use, beat back assault on eminent domain
- Public/private partnerships
- Integration of transit and TDM – working together
- Continually educate developers – always put bus access in new development – bus access is really important

Better coordinate land use and transportation:

(LEAD at State Level; COORDINATE locally)

- Model ordinances and assemble best practices
- Sponsor workshops with experts
- Inform/educate public and General Assembly
- Identify benefits and assemble in language that different audiences can understand. More marketing and education for all audiences
 - VMT reduction
 - Economic vitality
 - More efficient transit
- NVRC – regional organization established to coordinate planning better. Should be a need for regional commissions to also play a role in this
- Lead in policy issues and coordinate in implementation
- Identify transit and rail corridors – then work with local governments to identify where to make investments – the more that corridors are identified, the better land use can be coordinated
- Access by design – *Guide for Access by Design* – broad brush and detailed about radius for bus turning in development. State should develop handbook for access by design. That way everyone has a list of what needs to be done before development starts. If the state does this it gives them more stature
- DRPT needs to have a place at the table with VDOT's development of access standards
- Visualization techniques in Charlottesville area. DRPT needs to acquire this. SAFTEA-LU requires visualization



Emphasize the environmental benefits of rail, transit, and congestion management:

(LEAD)

- Compile evidence statewide/nationally/globally that highlights what the benefits are and educate audiences
- Speaker's bureau in response to critics – SWAT team to produce counter arguments
- Sponsor demonstrations and publish results
- Assist localities in measuring benefits and help transit systems develop unified message
- Educate practitioners to include planning, design, construction, and maintenance decisions by including more rigorous analyses (e.g. don't open HOV lanes too frequently in emergencies)
- DRPT should have a seat at the table when policy decisions are made (e.g., Hybrid exemptions, HOV occupancy, etc.)
- Utilize advocacy groups to educate public (Sierra Club, etc.)
- Advocate state policies (e.g. hybrid exemption on HOV lanes vs. overcrowding)



h. Hampton Roads Session

- i. Major issues and common themes**
- ii. Areas of importance to participants**
- iii. Participant Recommendations**

The fourth and final stakeholder session was held in Hampton Roads at the HRT offices on April 9, 2007. Seven stakeholders participated in this session. Attendees included one member of the Rail Advisory Board.

Major Issues and Common Themes

Some major issues and common themes expressed at this session included:

- New transportation agencies and new agency personnel need better access to education and training and need a clear definition of DRPT's expectations – especially in rural areas.
- DRPT needs to become more actively involved in regional and local planning. DRPT needs to identify long-term needs and upcoming trends.
- DRPT should communicate more effectively with stakeholders and promote communication between areas and agencies.
- DRPT should have field offices throughout the state – decentralize DRPT where there are heavy concentrations of public transit and congestion management/TDM issues.
- DRPT needs to educate state leaders and developers on congestion management (TDM) options.
- A suggestion was made that DRPT should facilitate more group sessions where transportation agencies with similar issues and concerns (perhaps along the business areas of DRPT [rail, transit, congestion management]) can come together on a regular basis (quarterly) to address issues. It was said that smaller communities have difficulty getting their issues addressed.



Areas of Importance to Participants

The participants focused primarily on rail and congestion management issues. These discussion items yielded the highest number of responses from the group.

For passenger and freight rail, the main areas of importance revolved around funding. DRPT should push harder at the legislative and congressional level to secure more funding. For passenger rail, DRPT should seek partnerships with private railroads.

Some discussions regarding congestion management suggested that DRPT should be more involved and let local agencies know they are “on the right track.” DRPT should also facilitate communication so that all stakeholder agencies across the state are aware of what everyone else is doing. DRPT needs more effective and efficient advertising to promote congestion management/TDM options.

Participant Recommendations

Feedback was collected on all discussion items, first from homogenous groups and then from all the participants at the session. Also in this session, the groups were asked to determine whether DRPT should “Lead” or “Coordinate” efforts regarding each discussion item. Each discussion item began with the phrase: “*What are the best ways for DRPT to...*” The recommendations for each discussion item are as follows:

Increase support to rural and small transit systems:

(Depends on maturity of system – Initial LEAD, thereafter COORDINATE)

- Education to rural transit on specific requirements needed to implement systems. Especially for new systems – start up manual for new agencies explaining the requirements
- Provide a training component to rural operators who may not have the level of staffing/expertise/knowledge
- More regular DRPT site visits

Develop a more active role in passenger rail for Virginia:

(LEAD)

- Offer financial opportunities – *Show us the money*
- Promote/advocate passenger rail
- Facilitate – seek partnerships with private RRs (Class 1)

Increase facilitation of freight rail improvements and preservation of rail corridors for the future:

(LEAD)

- Push to bring more money to the table – Push hard at the legislative and congressional level. \$3M per year (forever) for shortline railroads and shortlines have more than doubled. Needs more funding
- Purchase abandoned (or about to be abandoned) right-of-ways when opportunities arise – as a last resort – put the ROW in a bank to save for future use
- Speed up the process of implementing Rail Preservation Funding Agreements
- Safeguarding the public's investment

Increase participation in regional and local planning:

(COORDINATE)

- Dedicated staff at DRPT - similar to IL & NC to assist transportation operators where needed
- Routine and scheduled visits to learn about what the operators see as planning priorities, information collection, clarity of issues and concerns
- Implementation and exchanging information – need to coordinate between DRPT and local operators– can't be done over the phone – need more dialogue when questions arise
- Lack of continuity with issues – never a closure – particularly with small systems – local government has different expectation than DRPT – DRPT needs to talk to legislators
- Answer questions to legislative group
- System to forecast long-term needs
- System to identify upcoming trends in the transit environment
- DRPT needs to help identify “what's in the high beams”
- Transit doesn't have a formal forecasting process
- A lot of power in knowledge – If you have forecasting numbers you can debate more effectively to get more funding, etc.

Develop a more active role in congestion management:

(COORDINATE – Locals should take lead)

- Establish good benchmarks on local improvements to TDM activity. Need buy-in from DRPT to say, “You're on the right track”
- DRPT should provide independent look at measurements
- Assure that all localities of all sizes are aware of TDM activity and web based opportunities
- There is a breakdown of communication between areas/agencies. Everyone needs to be aware of what others are doing throughout the state



- Inter-state (not roads) connectivity between states (corridors) Virginia and NC, MD, PA, etc. How do I get from here to there if this were all interrelated?
- Voices need to be louder (TDM) – especially TRAFFIX
- If you took 10% of traffic off the roads in Hampton Roads during rush hour, you'd solve congestion for the next 10 years. If we took \$1 million dollars and put it to TDM, we could get more cars off the road. Effective and efficient advertising. Sustained effort to promote TDM. People to support effective advertising. Have to have buy-in from stakeholder leadership
- Calculate the infrastructure savings realized when fewer cars are on the road

Increase support to human service transportation:

(LEAD)

- Centralized human service web site designed to accommodate specific and tailored needs – statewide website
- To have DRPT staff to routinely communicate to all size government or transit entities to advise of grant opportunities and to assist with the process
- Communicate to stakeholders the availability of grant writers to help small and rural agencies
- Communication across the state
- DRPT should solicit self-help program (train the trainer). It's difficult to find out what people's needs are

Develop competitive transportation proposals and solutions as compared to highway solutions:

(LEAD)

- Develop a solid and well-researched criteria measurement to “rate and rank” proposals
- Level of quality goes way up
 - Public and private benefits
 - Costs per unit of benefit (cost-benefit ratio)
 - Changes in behavior
 - How many trucks off the road...
- If VDOT is going to buy a ROW for a new highway, they should secure an adjacent ROW for a rail system or freight system

Encourage transit-oriented development:

(LEAD)

- Interact with legislature
- Identify community needs and advise communities on what's available – products, services, grants
- Legislature doesn't seem to know about alternative transportation options. Legislature needs to be educated. It's not just about building roads. Educate on TDM
- Develop opportunities for partnership – proactive facilitator of partnerships (like Ballston)
- Let private sector build a station – give them exclusive rights

Better coordinate land use and transportation:

(LEAD)

- Promote requiring impact analyses of development. Catch developers before they even start building to educate them on options. Catch them early
- Offer technical support particularly to rural communities and small developers

Emphasize the environmental benefits of rail, transit, and congestion management:

(LEAD and COORDINATE)

- Gather compelling data and research material to place in front of:
 - Congressmen
 - Legislators
 - Public
 - Media
- Find out “sweet spot” to find what people respond to
- Take a shotgun approach to dissemination of information

Parking Lot Issues: (that could not be resolved during the session)

- DRPT should have field offices throughout the state – decentralize DRPT where there is heavy concentration of public transit and TDM issues
- Maybe there needs to be 5 or 6 different groups that can meet quarterly with similar issues and problems to get together to address issues. Smaller communities can't get their issues addressed in a larger setting



APPENDICES



A. Sign-In Sheets by Region





Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
The Smartest Distances Between Two Points

Strategic Assessment Workshop Roanoke, VA

Sign-In Sheet

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS (to receive DRPT news)
Tim Root	RATS	rats@rockbridge.net
Tom Burnap	Mt Rogers Community Services	ronb@mrsh.state.va.us
Nanpie Stuart	McRae's Comm. Exps. Bd.	nanpie@mrsh.state.va.us
Benjamin Tapp	City of Salem	btapp@cityofsa.gov
Joe Battelle	Rock County Transit HASC	rbattelle@rockcountyttransit.org
Don Beaud	BCM - WPA	brush@bmtzpmeycountyva.gov
Reya Dagenhart	Region 2000 LLC	rdagenhart@region2000.org
Mike Gwy	District Three Public Transit	mgwy@smgth.net
Frank Metcalf	S.A.A.D.	
Joyce Wray	Roanoke Regional Chamber	joyce@roanokechamber.org
Dan Foster	RAIL Solutions	dfoster@thead.com
Kenneth Young	CUMA/Central Mass. Agency of Planning	kyoung@cumac.com
Josh Baker	NEW Community Services/Community Transit	jbaker@newcs.state.pa.us
Mark McCaskill	AUSAC / RAMP	mark@ausac.org
Debi Porter	Lynchburg Reg. Chamber of Comm.	dporter@lynchburgchamber.org



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
The Smartest Distance Between Two Points

Strategic Assessment Workshop Richmond

Sign-In Sheet

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS (to receive DRPT news)
Vandie Reynolds	NEFIVE LLC PC	VFeyreids@compuserve.com
Bob Bryant	VA RR Association	rbryant@va-rra.org
Diana Witz	GWRC PD16	witz@GWREGION.ORG
Greggie Dynd	Greater District 14A	gdynd@advaan.org
Jim Bayley	VA Assoc. Railway Patrons	Bayley@earthlink.net
Patrick Mundy	PD9 - RAILROAD REGION	plmauney@rrregion.org
Andy Stewart	Virginia Chapter of Emerg	a.stewart@va-emer.org
Julie Heland	Frederick Area Rpt	jheland@moonstar.com
Samuel Buck	Blackstone	jhouseman@hvac.com
Lloyd Johnson	FAMPO	Robinson@GWregion.org
Paul Johnson	MPDC	johnson@mpdc.com
DICK BEASLEY	RAB	RABVA@WE.RICHMOND.ORG
Donna Spangney	SVNT	donna@va-rra.org
Wiley Mitchell	RAB	WMitchell@WLSA.VA.COM



Strategic Assessment Workshop
Northern Virginia

Sign-In Sheet

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS (to receive DRPT news)
LOIS WALSH	VHSR	LOWALICE@AOL.COM
Mutter Good	Grafton School, Inc.	wood @ grafton.org
Rollo Astin	Fairfax County	rdlo.astin@fairfaxva.gov
GEORGE BILLMYER	VHRA	GOTRAINS.ISME@VERIZON.NET
Scott Hatten	Pennsylvania County	shatten@pennsylvania.gov
AL HART	PRC	AHART@UNIVIS.COM
Robert Maynard	DRPC	rmaynard@drpc.com
Ally Bailey	Loudoun County	AllyBailey@loudoun.gov
Tom MacLachlan	Alexander County	TomMacLachlan@alexandervirginia.gov
Judy Connolly	CTB	jconnolly@ctb.com
Thomas Sullivan	Fairfax Co. Gas, WGS, with	thomas.sullivan@fairfaxva.gov
ALAN VERDE	City of Fairfax with	alan.verde@fairfaxva.gov
Steven DelGiudice	Arlington Transit	sdeldi@arlingtonva.us
RENNY PONTIER	Remond Charbon	renny.pontier@remondcharbon.org
Daniel P. Hays	VH SR	Daniel@VHSR.com



Sign-In Sheet

[illegible]

B. Facilitation Guide



Approach for Meeting:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Welcome by Matt Tucker | 9:00 - 9:10 |
| Turn over to Facilitators – Who We Are | 9:10 |
| 2. Introduction of Attendees | 9:10 – 9:25 (JIM) |
| Name, Agency | |
| 3. Facilitation Ground Rules | 9:25 – 9:30 (JIM) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set ground rules and post on board:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ What not How➤ Respect Others➤ No Bad Ideas – All Ideas are Good➤ No Put Downs➤ Use Active Verbs➤ Session may be recorded to develop notes➤ Cell Phones/Pagers Off or Set to Vibrate• Parking Lot issues | |

DRPT Mandate

The objective with the first exercise is out of respect to the participants who have been invited to provide their feedback – we do not want to begin with a presentation for 20 minutes. So, we begin by doing an activity that will help to establish awareness and understanding of DRPT's current legislative mandate.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 4. Getting Into Groups | 9:30 – 9:35 (BETH) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|

There will be times when we want to have the attendees break into homogenous groups, but this first activity does not require that. To start things rolling, we will place people into groups of 4 or 5 participants. This first breakout group session will be random. We will have attendees count off from 1 to 5 and get into groups with other individuals with the same number or we will get into groups by seating location.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 5. "What is the DRPT Mandate?" Activity | 9:35 – 9:50 (BETH) |
|--|--------------------|

We will ask each group to work together to write down what they think DRPT's current mandate is on a flip chart. We will designate the leader of each group (creatively). The groups will have 5 minutes to complete the exercise.

We will then provide the groups with a one-page handout "Overview of the DRPT Mandate" which incorporates the same language as the first three slides. We will also provide the groups with a page of sticky-dot



labels. Using the handout, we will ask the groups to compare what is on the handout to what they came up with on their own and put a dot on their group sheet next to each item they listed correctly. We will then post the results for the entire group to see and award the group with the most dots.

We will then distribute the slide show notes pages and begin with the Performance to Date section of the PowerPoint.

**6. PowerPoint – Performance to Date /Areas for Improvement/
Best Practices** 9:50 – 10:05 (JIM)

This is a straight up information dissemination of all three sections of the PowerPoint presentation.

7. BREAK (tell attendees 15 minute break) 10:05 – 10:25

Following the break, using a different strategy, we will shuffle the attendees into **homogenous** groups (e.g., rail with rail (including RAB), transit with transit, TDM, MPOs/PDCs, CTB and Chamber members). We will look at attendees at each location and determine the groups at that time. Using color coded cards, we will separate into groups. Like colored cards together.

8. Activity on Items for Discussion 10:25 – 11:45 (JIM)

Each of the homogenous groups will be assigned two questions from the list of Items for Discussion. The group will have ten to fifteen minutes to discuss the question and put their group recommendations for the best ways for DRPT to ... on a flip chart.

The group discussion will be setup as a brainstorming session (i.e., no ideas listed will be rejected).

Each group will appoint a scribe and a spokesperson who will report on the recommendations for that group and all attendees will then get a chance to add anything they would like to the recommendation list.

This process will continue for all 10 questions.

11. Summary and Wrap Up 11:45 – 11:55 (JIM)

Facilitators will wrap and summarize the day's discussions. They will thank the participants.



12. **Feedback** (if time allows)

13. **Closing remarks by Matt Tucker**

11:55 – 12:00

Matt Tucker closes meeting with his thank you and any comments about next steps



C. PowerPoint Presentation to Participants



Strategic Assessment of the
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Stakeholder Workshop

April 9, 2007

Hampton Roads

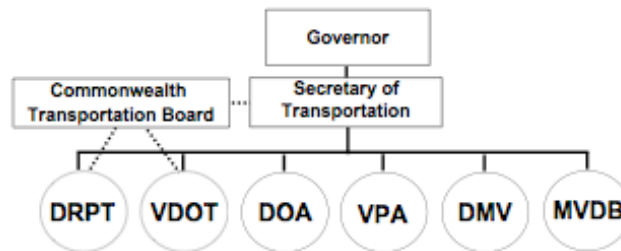


Agenda

- Introduction
- Discuss DRPT Mandate
- Discuss DRPT Business Areas
 - Status today
 - Options for improvement
- Next Steps



Who is DRPT?



Department of Rail and Public Transportation:

the state agency responsible for rail, public transportation and congestion management in Virginia

Overview of DRPT Mandate

Public Transportation, TDM, Ridesharing, and Passenger and Freight Rail

- Determine present & future needs/economic feasibility (1)
- Formulate and implement plans and programs (2)
 - PT, TDM & Ridesharing: establishment, improvement, development and coordination
 - Rail services and corridors: retention and improvement
 - TDM/Innovative Technology: coordinate with VDOT
- Coordinate with VDOT in the conduct of research, policy analysis, planning, and implementation to ensure effectiveness, safety and efficiency (3)
- Determine uniform financial and operating data on and criteria for evaluating all public transportation activities (4)
- Provide training & technical support for service improvement to transportation operators and ridesharing providers (5)

Overview of DRPT Mandate Public Transportation, TDM, Ridesharing, and Passenger and Freight Rail

- Maintain liaison with state, local, district, and federal agencies, and other entities (6)
- Receive, administer, and allocate all planning, operating, capital, and any other grant programs from the FTA, FRA, FHWA, other agencies & the State (7,8)
- Promote use of public transit and rail to improve mobility (9)
- Represent the Commonwealth on local, regional, and national agencies, industry associations, committees, task forces, etc. (10)
- Coordinate with VDOT on planning, location, design, construction, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, purchase and rehabilitation of facilities and services (11)

Overview of DRPT Mandate Legislation & Safety

- Coordinate with State Corporation Commission on matters dealing with rail safety and regulation (12)
- Prepare and review state legislation and Commonwealth recommendations on Federal legislation and regulations (13)
- Promote public transportation, ridesharing, and passenger and freight rail safety (14)



Organizational Assessment of the
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Performance to-date



Current Performance/Goal Accomplishment Overall Performance Assessment

- Adequate allocation/disbursement of existing programs funds
- Not meeting goals in assessing future needs, as well as rail, transit and congestion management planning
- Low profile and under-representation in major decision-making institutions/processes in Virginia



Current Performance/Goal Accomplishment
Customer Perception

- DRPT profile is low outside transit/rail community
- Low DRPT participation at many MPOs and at the local government level
- Rural and small urban areas need stronger DRPT support in their communities
- At most MPOs and policy-making institutions, DRPT does not play a role proportionate to its prominence in Commonwealth transportation policy

Current Performance/Goal Accomplishment
Role in Transportation Planning

- Determination of statewide transit needs incomplete:
 - 1-2 year needs informally fully forecast
 - 6 year needs partially forecast
 - Longer term needs evaluated only in response to studies in specific markets
- Determination of statewide rail needs incomplete:
 - No system in place to forecast needs and priorities
- Multimodal planning participation largely reactive



Current Performance/Goal Accomplishment

Rail

- Capital improvements managed by DRPT
 - Washington to Richmond, but investment slower than expected
- Progress on future investments limited to planning studies:
 - Significant potential to increase and enhance passenger rail service in Washington to Richmond corridor
 - Progress on other passenger rail service projects slow
- No formal evaluation process or systematic statewide plan to demonstrate need for significant investments

Current Performance/Goal Accomplishment

Transit

- Current funding role valued by grantees
- Rural and small urban grantee technical assistance limited compared to many other states
- Limited evaluation of public benefits of state investments



Current Performance/Goal Accomplishment **Congestion Management**

- Boundaries of congestion management unclear
- Telework VA & ridesharing clearest components
 - Needs assessment and promotion
- Significant potential for greater impact in areas outside of today's program

Organizational Assessment of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Areas for Improvement



Focusing on Public Benefits and Return on Investment

- Information related to public benefits can play a key role in building support and achieving results:
 - 1985 and 1994 studies demonstrating the public benefits of Metrorail in Northern VA, which were critical to maintaining legislative support
 - Colorado DOT measured the benefits of re-locating freight traffic off of the Front Range railroad in order to determine potential contributors to the capital costs
 - FDOT studied the economic impacts and transportation benefits of high-speed rail between Orlando and Tampa, and used the results to prioritize the corridor over others in the state
 - FHWA has considered the impact of highway corridor investments on economic development in order to evaluate potential corridor projects

Role in Transportation Planning

- Planning decisions often drive policy and investment decisions for transportation
- DRPT does not fulfill the role in planning that many other states fulfill:
 - North Carolina and Illinois both have 6 or more staff dedicated to statewide and mode-specific planning
 - Planning could be in-house and/or in partnership with other organizations
- Key planning organizations and projects need stronger DRPT involvement:
 - Regional MPOs/Transportation Planning Board
 - Multimodal Planning Office/VTRANS
 - Transportation associations and advocacy groups



Broader DRPT Planning Issues to be Addressed

- Transit-oriented development
- Land use planning and coordination
- Environmental benefits of DRPT programs

Rail Transportation: Business Area Improvements

- Demonstrating ROI and public benefits
- Increasing role in:
 - passenger rail
 - facilitating freight rail improvements
 - preserving rail corridors
- Identifying strategic investments
- Conducting strategic planning
- Making the case for additional investment



Rail Transportation: Planning and Policy Improvements

- Needs assessment
- Strategic investment plan
- Vision and goals for rail in Virginia
- Rail policy development
- Increased planning and policy participation:
 - Local level discussions (MPO, PDC, etc)
 - Regional discussions
 - State discussions

Transit: Business Area Improvements

- Demonstrating ROI and public benefits
- Developing an asset management plan
- Increasing technical assistance and rural/small transit support role
- Identifying strategic investments
- Conducting strategic planning
- Making the case for additional investment



Transit: Planning and Policy Improvements

- Needs assessment
- Strategic investment plan
- Vision and goals for transit in Virginia
- Transit policy development
- Increased planning and policy participation:
 - Local level discussions (MPO, PDC, etc)
 - Regional discussions
 - State discussions

Congestion Management: Business Area Improvements

- Demonstrating ROI and public benefits
- Increasing the reach of current programs:
 - Telework
 - Commuter services
- Strengthening congestion management role for major transportation projects (ex: Springfield Interchange, Wilson Bridge, Dulles project, etc.) and key corridors



Congestion Management: Planning and Policy Improvements

- Needs assessment
- Strategic investment plan
- Vision and goals for congestion management in Virginia
- Congestion management policy development:
 - Coordination with VDOT, other agencies and localities
- Increased planning and policy participation:
 - Local level discussions (MPO, PDC, etc)
 - Regional discussions
 - State discussions

Organizational Assessment of the
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Best Practices



Best Practices- Planning & Policy Development

- DRPT does not take the role in planning and statewide evaluation that many other states take
 - Illinois dedicates 7 staff to:
 - Rail program planning
 - Manage special transit studies
 - Represent the division in regional and state-wide planning and engineering efforts
 - Detailed evaluations and analyses of public transportation and multi-modal projects
 - North Carolina involves more than 6 staff in:
 - Attending MPO and regional planning meetings
 - Participating in regional and system transit studies
 - Managing consultant-led statewide planning contracts
 - Overseeing statewide planning projects in conjunction with MPOs
 - Involvement in feasibility studies for inter-modal and bus maintenance facilities

Best Practices- Rail

- Performance requirements linked to capital investments:
 - *Capitol Corridor* (Sacramento-San Jose) capital investments tied to service frequency over various segments, levels of on-time performance and specified travel times
 - Prioritization of capital investments as part of long-range plan for rail corridors with freight railroads, passenger rail, and state/local government stakeholders all involved in the selection process
- State/county acquisition of rail lines to ensure priority handling of passenger trains (NC, FL, CA, WA):
 - Control of dispatch ensures priority for passenger rail
 - Agreements with freight railroads regarding access still needed
- States with successful rail programs invest significant resources into rail planning and program management:
 - IL: 4 staff dedicated to planning, 3 more to passenger rail grants
 - NC: more than 45 dedicated to project execution and passenger rail grants



Best Practices- Transit

- Other states with similar numbers of rural and small urban grantees provide more technical assistance
 - NC: 8 staff for community transportation support
 - IL: 10 staff for small urban and rural grantees
- Technical assistance includes:
 - Greater field presence, including staff posted to other offices
 - Advising and assisting in the preparation of plans and studies
 - Attending local steering committee meetings
 - Leading development of Human Services Transportation Plans
 - Federal grant program management
 - Support for technology investments and procurement
 - Statewide vehicle procurement
- Promoting public benefits of transit investments

Best Practices- Congestion Management

- Best programs contribute to vehicle mile reductions compared to trends and contribute to meeting air quality goals
- Other states do significantly more in TDM/Congestion Management
 - Development of a statewide TDM plan (NC)
 - Regional web-based trip planning, including rail and transit
 - Development of model ordinances for land use & reduced parking (NC)
 - Technical assistance in cross-jurisdictional transportation planning (CA)
 - Assessment of corridor-related transportation problems and development of integrated program of desired improvements (CA)
 - Consideration/demos of congestion pricing
 - Land use planning including traffic impact studies
- If DRPT's congestion management area is expanded, it could include:
 - Analysis and promotion of congestion relief projects
 - Traveler information systems to avoid congestion



Items for Discussion

- What are the best ways for DRPT to:
 - Increase support to rural and small transit systems?
 - Develop a more active role in passenger rail for Virginia?
 - Increase facilitation of freight rail improvements and preservation of rail corridors for the future?
 - Increase participation in regional and local planning?
 - Develop a more active role in congestion management?
 - Increase support to human service transportation?
 - Develop competitive transportation proposals and solutions as compared to highway solutions?
 - Encourage transit oriented development?
 - Better coordinate land use and transportation?
 - Emphasize the environmental benefits of rail, transit and congestion management?

DRPT Section in the Code of Virginia

§ 32.1-263.6. Responsibilities of Department.

The Department shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Determine present and future needs for, and economic feasibility of providing, public transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing facilities and services and the retention, improvement, and addition of passenger and freight rail transportation in the Commonwealth;
2. Formulate and implement plans and programs for the establishment, improvement, development and coordination of public transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing facilities and services, and the retention and improvement of passenger and freight rail transportation services and corridors in the Commonwealth, and coordinate transportation demand management and innovative technological transportation initiatives with the Department of Transportation;
3. Coordinate with the Department of Transportation in the conduct of research, policy analysis, and planning for the rail and public transportation modes as may be appropriate to ensure the provision of effective, safe, and efficient public transportation and passenger and freight rail services in the Commonwealth;
4. Develop uniform financial and operating data on and criteria for evaluating all public transportation activities in the Commonwealth, develop specific methodologies for the collection of such data by public transit operators, regularly and systematically verify such data by means of financial audits and periodic field reviews of operating data collection methodologies, and develop such other information as may be required to evaluate the performance and improve the economy or efficiency of public transit or passenger and freight rail operations, transportation demand management programs, and ridesharing in the Commonwealth;
5. Provide training and other technical support services to transportation operators and ridesharing coordinators as may be appropriate to improve public transportation, ridesharing, and passenger and freight rail services;
6. Maintain liaison with state, local, district and federal agencies or other entities, private and public, having responsibilities for passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation programs;
7. Receive, administer and allocate all planning, operating, capital, and any other grant programs from the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, and other agencies of the United States government for public transportation, passenger and freight rail transportation, transportation demand management, and ridesharing purposes with approval of the Board and to comply with all conditions attendant thereto;
8. Administer all state grants for public transportation, rail transportation, ridesharing, and transportation demand management purposes with approval of the Board;
9. Promote the use of public transportation, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and passenger and freight rail services to improve the mobility of Virginia's citizens and the transportation of goods;
10. Represent the Commonwealth on local, regional, and national agencies, industry associations, committees, task forces, and other entities, public and private, having responsibility for passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation;
11. Represent the Commonwealth's interests in passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, and public transportation and coordinate with the Department of Transportation in the planning, location, design, construction, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, purchase, and rehabilitation of facilities and services that affect or are used by passenger and freight rail, transportation demand management, ridesharing, or public transportation;
12. Coordinate with the State Corporation Commission on all matters dealing with rail safety inspections and rail regulations which fall within its purview;
13. Prepare and review state legislation and Commonwealth recommendations on federal legislation and regulations as directed by the Secretary of Transportation; and
14. Promote public transportation, ridesharing, and passenger and freight rail safety.

(1992, c. 157; 2002, c. 355.)

